

Love Is The One Thing That Cannot Hurt Your Neighbor
(Romans 13: 10)

Text Romans 13: 10.

In looking for an appropriate theme for this Sunday, the United Church calendar had the two Scripture lessons which we heard read. The events of the past weeks and months should certainly cause us to take a close look at the words that were written such a long time ago. Many people think and feel that the words of the Bible are not quite relevant today. They only applied 2000 years or so ago. But if we examine the words of both Jesus and Paul we can find answers for our present day and age.

If we look close at the confrontation that Jesus had with the Pharisees we can see at once that their motives were not exactly pure. They came to Him hoping to trip Him up and to get the goods on Him so they could destroy Him. First they flattered Him and coated their words with honey so the following words would not seem to be damaging to Jesus. Men operate sometimes like this today. This isn't a new thing under the sun. They told Him, "Master, we know you are an honest man, that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing to you, and that you teach the way of God in all honesty. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay, yes or no? Here is where they thought they had the trap ready to spring shut on Him. If He answers, no don't pay taxes but just be true to God, He is talking against Caesar and this is treason. But we are told He saw through their hypocrisy and asked for a coin. His answer "Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God," was a real shocker for these people and totally unexpected.

Then if we look at the words of Paul we see that he is admonishing the people to obey the laws and to be law abiding. To not be afraid of the magistrates. Only the criminal needs to be afraid of authority. Then he tells them the Commandments are to be kept and not forgotten. But one thing to remember, is ^{THE} ~~one~~ ^{IMPORTANCE} of the two Commandments that Jesus said were ~~the~~ most important. The first one is to love God completely. The second is to love your neighbor as yourself. Now Paul is re-iterating these words. He tells them, "Love is the one thing that

cannot hurt your neighbor." Yet if we look at our society today, we do not see much in the way of love. Instead we see hatred. We see this hatred in our national politics, between men and between parties. We see it between races. We see it between religions. And we even see it in our Churches. Many of the movements that started out in this country legitimately have become nothing more than an excuse to do whatever one pleases and to disregard the rights and privileges of everyone else. This may include fire bombing someone's home or business. Or it may involve sniping at someone with a rifle. Or even demonstrating by smashing windows and store fronts. No one seems to care what happens just so we keep the headlines aglow by showing that we have a cause we are doing these things for.

In a recent issue of Christianity today, there is an article about the National Council of Churches. It points out that at one of their recent sessions a policy statement was proposed and passed by an 81-6 vote, ^{IT STATED} ~~that~~, "We recognize that when justice cannot be secured either through action within existing structures or through civil disobedience, an increasing number of Christians may feel called to seek justice through resistance or revolution." Unquote. Now this is a group made up of very learned and able men. They are supposed to represent Christianity too by the way. If this is the message that Jesus spoke then, I think I am reading His message wrong. He never advocated hatred and violence. His message was one of love for one another. And this isn't just my idea either. In the same issue of Christianity Today is a summary of the news. It is entitled, "Back to Violence as usual." The very first sentence is, "1968 may go down as the year in which the world tried to cope with a rising tide of violence while ecumenical assemblies sought to encourage it." Unquote.

We have had all types of violence in our nation. We have had several prominent people shot. Then the hue and cry arose that we should have gun legislation and every politician worth his salt proposed it so the measure would carry his nametag and identify him as being on the right track. This past week someone tried to assassinate the premier of Greece with a ^{THEN WITH FIRE BOMBS} ~~fire~~ bomb. I made the facetious remark to someone that we need gasoline control laws so that the threat from fire bombs will be non-existent. Now of course this is ridiculous. And I think

just as ridiculous is the thought that registering guns will stop crime and violence. Why don't we register all paring knives, carving knives, pocket knives and screw drivers? All of these can and have been used to commit murder. Of all the proponents of gun legislation I have not heard or read of any ^{ONE} of them making any kind of remark concerning the looting of a store in Watts this week, and the stealing of over one hundred guns and ammunition. Have you? ^{YET THIS IS ONLY ONE INSTANCE & IT HAS HAPPENED MANY TIMES} I think the time has come when we should call a spade a spade. That we should stop protecting these people. That we should start treating them as criminals. Do you know why the disturbance started in Watts this week? ^{BIG BAD} Because the brutal police were arresting a woman for being drunk and disorderly. ^{EXAMPLE IN HOLLYWOOD ON FRIDAY} I think we have come to the point in this country where we are afraid to do anything to these people because they happen to have black skins. The laws have been made for the black as well as the white. I do not think that any white man should receive any preferential treatment because he is white. If he is guilty of a crime then he deserves to be punished. And I think this applies to all Americans as well.

We have many ministers and priests leading protests and marching for different causes. I think that perhaps some of this is o. k. In a conversation I had with a certain minister friend of mine the talk rolled around to civil rights as it usually does today. He was telling of a minister he knows who went down to Mississippi and marched carrying a placard. He came back and was telling of the courage it took to march such as that. ^{MY FRIEND} Paul said he told him that it didn't require ^{QUIRE} too much guts to march with a couple hundred thousand other people, but it does require guts to stand up in his pulpit and point out the issues that should be pointed out within his own congregation. This thought has been in my mind all week. I agree with this. In the musical comedy, "The Music Man," the lead male part ^{OF PROF. HAROLD HILL} (and for the life of me I can't remember the man's name, ~~he~~ was played by Robert Preston in the movie version), ^{AND} well anyhow one of the songs he sings tells of the problem involved in the little town he comes to. ^{WHICH IS RIVER CITY} He sings ~~that~~, "You've got troubles. Right here in River City." ^{WELL, WE CAN SAY THAT} We have troubles right here in (Lamartine or Emlenton). We can go out that door and talk all we want about civil rights, but actually are we in a position where this is a problem for us? Of course it isn't. But we have other

problems here. We have problems of people who need help financially and otherwise. We have people who do not go to any church and they need to be contacted and asked to come to worship God and accept Jesus Christ. ^{WE HAVE THE PROBLEM OF YOUNG PEOPLE} Yes we have problems and we don't need to run down to Little Rock Arkansas, or Mississippi, or anywhere else for that matter. Jesus said something which is too often overlooked by all of us. He said, "Before you take the splinter out of someone else's eye, first take the beam out of your own." Someone else has coined the expression a different way. He said sweep the dirt from in front of your own door before you sweep someone else's. But the gist is the same, that we should take care of our own problems and when we have them cleared up, then start on somebody else.

An Episcopal priest was spending his vacation in the backwoods country and he lost his way while out for a stroll so he stopped at the first farm he came to. The old farmer told him how to get back to his destination, and the priest thanked him and then struck up a conversation with him. During their chat he told the farmer who he was and the farmer told him that he too was an Episcopal. The priest wanted to know to what parish he belonged and the farmer said he didn't know anything about any parish. He asked him, "well then who confirmed you?" The farmer said he didn't know anything about that either. Then how can you be an Episcopalian, the priest asked? Well you see it was like this the farmer said, "Last winter I went to church and it was called E-piscopal and I heard the preacher there say, that they left undone the things they oughter done, and they'd done some things they oughter done, and I says to myself, "thats my fix exactly," and ever since then I've been an E-piscopalian. Now this is the way many of us act. We know what we should do and we know what we should be doing, but somehow or other we seem to have lost sight of these things. We should be trying to bring others not only into the church but to Jesus Christ. Yet we go about it in such a way that we actually do nothing toward this end. We seem to be trying to keep our own little churches sort of like an exclusive club. It's only open to certain people and if they don't meet our standards or the standards we have sort of set up, why then these people are completely unacceptable. In many respects our churches throughout our country are run like closed shops. In order to belong you dress a certain way or earn a certain amount, or meet some other man made rule.

Salem Lemartine 9:30 8/18/68

Processional Hymn 18
*Call to Worship Page 201
*Confession of Sin
*Assurance of Pardon
Scripture Epistle Romans 13: 1-10
Gospel Mark 12: 13-17
*Gloria Patri
*Apostles Creed
*Prayer
Anthem
Announcements
B. Graham Crusade Sept. 7 7:30

Offering, Response, Prayer
Hymn 211
Sermon
Prayer & Lord's Prayer
*Hymn 171
*Benediction
*Threefold Amen
*Postlude

St. John Emerton 11:00 8/18/68

Processional Hymn 11
*Call to Worship
*Confession of Sin 1st Prayer Pg. 4
*Assurance of Pardon
Responsive Reading Sel 56 Pg. 603
Hymn 17
Scripture Epistle Romans 13: 1-10
Gospel Mark 12: 13-17
*Gloria Patri
*Apostles Creed
*Prayer & Response
Anthem
Announcements

UNION METHODIST CHURCH

Offering & Prayer
*Hymn 275
Sermon
Prayer & Lord's Prayer
*Hymn 79
*Benediction
*Threefold Amen
*Postlude